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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of:	:	
Gaus, et al.	:	
Filed: 26 June, 2001	:	ON PETITION
Application No. 09/681,920	:	
Docket No.: RD-25,376	:	

This is a decision on the renewed petition filed herein on 9 October, 2003, under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) (as to unintentional delay) to revive the above-identified application.

For the reasons set forth below, the petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **GRANTED**.

BACKGROUND

The record indicates that:

- Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly to the non-final Office action mailed on 25 February, 2003, and due (absent extension of time) on or before Tuesday, 27 May, 2003;
- the application was deemed abandoned after midnight 25 May, 2003;
- the Notice of Abandonment was mailed on 24 September, 2003;
- Petitioner Robert Reese (Reg. No. 45,548) files the instant petition, fee and reply and make the statement of unintentional delay.

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).¹

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority.

The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition.²

Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable.³ Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a).⁴ And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter.⁵ Failure to show diligence does not constitute the care required under Pratt.

(By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁶))

It long has been the position of the Office that the use of the filing periods (such as in 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b)) as an "extension of time" is an "abuse" of the procedures for reviving abandoned

¹ 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:
35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.
Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

² Therefore, by example, an unavoidable delay in the payment of the Filing Fee might occur if a reply is shipped by the US Postal Service, but due to catastrophic accident, the delivery is not made.

³ See: Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice, 62 *Fed. Reg.* at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 *Off. Gaz. Pat. Office* at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

⁴ See: In re Application of G, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

⁵ See: Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment, 1124 *Off. Gaz. Pat. Office* 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 *Off. Gaz. Pat. Office supra*.

⁶ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

applications, and is contrary to the meaning and intent of the regulation.⁷ The Office has indicated that petitions to revive must be filed promptly after the applicant becomes aware of the abandonment.⁸ Such delays are inconsistent with a showing of diligence in the prosecution of one's application,⁹ and such a course of action would preclude revival of an application under 37 C.F.R. §1.137.¹⁰)

Allegations as to the Petition
Alleging Unintentional Delay


Petitioner has filed the petition (with fee), a reply in the form of a request for reconsideration and made the statement of unintentional delay.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, the petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is granted.

The instant application is being forwarded to Technology Center 2600 for further processing in due course.

Telephone inquiries concerning this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (703) 305-9199.



John J. Gillon, Jr.
Senior Attorney
Office of Petitions

⁷ See: In re Application of S, 8 USPQ2d 1630, 1632 (Comm'r Pats. 1988). Where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional, the petitioner must meet a burden of establishing that the delay was unintentional within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b). See: In re Application of G, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

⁸ See: Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment, 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office supra.

⁹ The test of diligence in the prosecution of an application before the Commissioner is, in the context of ordinary human affairs, the test is such care as is generally used and observed by prudent and careful persons in relation to their most important business. Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31 (Comm'r Pat. 1887); Ex parte Henrich, 1913 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 139, 141 (Comm'r. Pat. 1913).

¹⁰ That an applicant may have been preoccupied with other matters that took precedence over the revival of an abandoned application is not viewed as an adequate justification for delay. See Smith v. Mossinghoff, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 USPQ 977, 982 (D.C. Cir. 1982). Rather, the revival of an application that was not intentionally abandoned is the applicant's "most important business." See Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pats. 31, 32-33 (1887). Specifically, an applicant seeking revival of an abandoned application is expected to file a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137 within two to three months of discovering its abandonment. See In re Kokaji, 1 USPQ2d 2005, 2007 (Comm'r Pats. 1986); see also Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53161, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88-89 (response to comment 65).